

Judge Parker's Charge to Grand Jury 1926

Members of the Grand Jury: For reasons satisfactory to the Court, you have been recalled here today for the special purpose of considering the evidence relating to the alleged murder of the Reverend Mr. Hall and of Mrs. Mills some four years ago, with a view of ascertaining whether one or more indictments ought to be found in that matter and, if so, who should be the parties indicted. Three persons up to this time have been arrested and charged with the crime; the first is Mrs. Hall, the widow of the deceased clergyman, who is out on bail; the other two are her brother, William Stevens, and another relative, Henry Carpenter.

The general circumstances surrounding this case are so much a matter of public notoriety that it would be a waste of time on the part of the Court to enter into any extended recital of them. At the same time, it is eminently proper for the Court to say that in conducting your investigation and reaching a result, you should not depend upon anything except the evidence laid before you within the precincts of the Grand Jury room. It may as well be assumed, however, for present purposes, that the evidence furnished you will demonstrate to your satisfaction that the death of these two persons, or one of them, was in fact the result of an act of criminal homicide, and you will probably have no difficulty in finding that that act of homicide was an act of murder. If you reach this result, the next question will be, does the evidence fairly show who committed that murder? Naturally, if no murder was committed, there can be no indictment, and if murder was committed and you cannot ascertain who did it,

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